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TO: ADMINISTRATOR AND SENIOR EXECUTIVES

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AIR:

Maryland Wants EPA To Reduce Smog Coming From Midwest. The [AP](#) (11/17) reports officials in Maryland “are seeking federal help in reducing the pollution that blows in from the Midwest.” On Wednesday “state environmental regulators filed a petition” asking the EPA “to crack down on 19 coal plants in Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia whose emissions they say make Maryland’s air unhealthy to breathe on hot summer days.”

Real-Time Map Shows Global Air Pollution. The [Washington Post](#) (11/17, Denyer) reports on a real-time air pollution visualization. The map by AirVisual “uses big data to produce a stunning and almost hypnotic image of the globe, showing air pollution,” the Post explains and provides a [link](#) to the real-time interactive map.

Wildfires In Southeast US Affecting Individuals With Asthma, Other Breathing Problems. The [AP](#) (11/17, Landrum, Yonker, Bynum) reports that “dozens of wildfires that have burned an estimated 190 square miles across the Southeast have thrown a shroud of smoke over the region in the past week or so.” Reports on “air-quality...from the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies show pollutants have reached unhealthy levels.” According to the AP, “Asthma sufferers and others with breathing problems are turning up at hospitals and doctors’ waiting rooms, wheezing and hacking.”

Supreme Court Justice Alito Criticizes EPA’s Regulation Over Greenhouse Gases. [E&E Publishing](#) (11/17) reports that during an event hosted by the conservative Federalist Society, Supreme Court Justice

Samuel Alito “praised a Scalia opinion that knocked down a U.S. EPA rule that sought to modify the Clean Air Act’s thresholds for greenhouse gases.” According to Alito, *Utility Air Regulatory Group v. EPA*, decided in 2014, allowed agencies to “argue they should have the ability to use their technical expertise when issuing regulations.” As a result, Alito says the EPA “took the statute and it erased the numbers that Congress wrote and it wrote in numbers that were more to its liking.”

BROWNFIELDS/SUPERFUND/OTHER CLEANUPS:

EPA Involved In Investigations Of Salt Lake City Groundwater Plume. The [Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (11/17, Donoghue) reports that the state of Utah, the EPA, and the Veterans Administration hospital in Salt Lake City are working together to “formalize an extensive agreement to handle the long-term testing and remediation of a contaminated groundwater plume.” Route sampling in 1990 found “PCE about 2,200 feet down gradient of the 72-acre medical campus,” and the EPA now says that “results of that survey — in which 21 locations had detectable levels of PCE — merits additional investigation.”

Erin Brockovich Vows To Investigate El Cajon’s Toxic Plume. [KGTV-TV](#) San Diego (11/17, Thode) reports that attorney Erin Brockovich says she “will be investigating the allegations of a toxic plume of groundwater in an El Cajon neighborhood.” The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board claims that groundwater in the area “has been polluted with cancer-causing chemicals for decades and can emit toxins into the air above via toxic vapors.” Meanwhile, residents of the Starlight Mobile Home park say the park is making them sick.

Local TV Coverage: Newfield

Superfund Site. [WNET-TV New York](#) (11/17, 5:38 p.m. EST) reports, “Next to Newfield, where a superfund site contaminated with almost 66,000 cubic meters of radioactive slag is in for cleanup. The Shieldalloy Metallurgical Corporation manufactured specialty metals for a decade, leaving behind cancer-causing toxins that can also damage the central nervous system. The Environmental Protection Agency says the company will cover the \$5.6 million cost of capping a one-acre plot, excavating and removing contaminated sediment in other areas, and treating polluted groundwater. But environmental groups call capping it instead of eradicating it a dirty deal. It doesn’t address the explosive perchlorate contamination there.” [NJTV Trenton \(NJ\)](#) (11/17, 11:08 p.m. EST) also covered the story.

EPA To Resume Sampling For Radioactive Contamination Near West Lake Landfill.

[KWMU-FM St. Louis](#) (11/17, Chen) reports that the EPA plans to sample dust and soils at the homes of Bridgeton residents living near the West Lake Landfill in response to allegations of radioactive contamination. EPA officials previously “said there is no evidence that radioactive material has migrated away from the site.” However, EPA spokesperson Angela Brees said that “if individuals have new, scientifically valid data that we could evaluate they should share that with EPA. The protection of human health and the environment remains EPA’s highest priority at the West Lake site and all current, scientifically valid, data available to EPA demonstrate no off-site health risk to residents or employees in the local area.” The [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) (11/17, Gray) reports that the EPA has agreed to look into the issue “out of an abundance of caution.”

EPA Hosts Public Meeting To Discuss Bonita Peak Mining District.

The [Cortez \(CO\) Journal](#) (11/17) reports that the EPA hosted a public meeting in Durango on Tuesday to discuss with residents the recent designation of the Bonita Peak Mining District as a Superfund site, and the agency’s upcoming report “on how best to clean up the mining region.”

Sierra Club Blasts EPA’s NJ Superfund Site Cleanup As “Sell-Out”.

[Greenwire](#) (11/18) reports that the Sierra Club blasted the EPA’s \$5.6 million cleanup plan for a Newfield, New Jersey, Superfund site as a “sell-out.” According to the environmental group, the plan only caps pollution at the site, “leaving tons of toxic material that will affect the groundwater and community around the Shieldalloy facility.” According to Sierra Club director Jeff Tittel, “This is a dirty deal that lets polluters off the hook for millions of dollars at the expense of the community and the environment.”

Additional Reading.

- ***Cottonwood School District Seeks Cleanup Grant.*** [Cottonwood \(ID\) Chronicle](#). (11/17, Johnson)

BUDGET:

Additional Reading.

- ***Video: Trump’s Plan To Dismantle The EPA Won’t Save Any Money, Because The Agency Already Spends Basically Nothing.*** [Quartz](#) (11/17, Wolfson).

CLIMATE CHANGE:

UN Climate Negotiators Declare

Climate Action “Irreversible.” The [AP](#) (11/17, Ritter) reports that ministers at the UN climate talks in Marrakesh “reiterated their commitment to the Paris Agreement with a proclamation Thursday saying climate action is ‘irreversible.’” The statement calls for “the highest political commitment to combat climate change” and reaffirms the promise by rich countries to mobilize \$100 billion annually by 2020 to help poor countries adapt. [Reuters](#) (11/17) reports the statement was prompted by the election of Donald Trump, which has “cast a shadow over the Paris deal.” A second [Reuters](#) (11/17) reports that delegates “applauded, joined hands above their heads in standing ovation after the proclamation was read out.”

Climate Negotiators Debate Over Climate Aid Funding For Poor Nations. [Reuters](#) (11/17) reports that negotiators and development agencies at the Marrakesh climate talks “spurred on Thursday over the future of the Adaptation Fund to help vulnerable communities cope with climate change.” There is also “disagreement over how strong a commitment rich countries were prepared to make” on funding for developing

nations' climate adaptation efforts. Some developed nations "do not want to take an immediate decision," pointing to "a proliferation of climate funds, and the legal questions that would have to be addressed to transfer where the fund sits," given that the Kyoto Protocol which set up the fund expires in 2020.

UK Ratifies Paris Climate Agreement.

Reuters (11/17) reports Britain announced on Thursday it ratified the Paris Agreement. "The UK is ratifying the historic Paris Agreement so that we can help to accelerate global action on climate change and deliver on our commitments to create a safer, more prosperous future for us all," Nick Hurd, Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry, said. The period for parliamentary scrutiny of ratification "expired with no objections."

US Would Join Only Nicaragua In

Opposing Climate Deal. Reuters (11/17) reports that if President-elect Donald Trump pulls the US out of the Paris climate agreement, the US will join only Nicaragua in formally opposing the accord. Nicaragua "was the only nation to reject the agreement last December," but in contrast to Trump's stated position on the deal, Nicaragua is calling for "far more drastic action to limit rising temperatures."

UN Launches Initiative To Save Peatlands, Prevent Carbon Emissions.

Reuters (11/17) reports on the launch of a UN Environment Programme initiative to help prevent the destruction of peatlands which sequester carbon. "Peatlands cover just 3 percent of the world's land surface, but contain twice as much carbon as the entire biomass of the world's forests," Reuters explains, adding that 15 percent of peatlands have been drained, releasing carbon. UNEP head Erik Solheim said in a statement, "This will cause misery and chaos for millions of vulnerable people, so we cannot afford to let any opportunity to reduce emissions slip by."

Donations To Environmental Groups

"Surge" After Trump Victory. Bloomberg News (11/17, Eckhouse) reports, "Donald Trump's unexpected election victory has spurred environmental groups' best fundraising campaign yet." The Sierra Club "has signed about 11,000 new monthly donors since the election," a nine-fold increase over December last year, while the Environmental Defense Fund and Natural Resources Defense Council "also report surges." The funding boosts are "part of a growing

movement to offset Trump's agenda through philanthropy."

Mooney: Trump Could Boost Carbon Capture To Help Coal And Climate.

Chris Mooney writes in his column for the Washington Post (11/17) that Donald Trump's pledge to rescue the coal industry "could, ironically, help to deliver one of the key missing pieces that researchers say is needed to fix climate change:" carbon capture and storage. There are 38 major CCS projects underway globally, but CCS "has been struggling in recent years" with low investment. Mooney notes that DOE has withdrawn funding from the Kemper project in Mississippi being managed by Southern Company due to cost overruns. Mooney writes that "CCS is a technology that is believed to be essential to battling climate change," a conclusion he says is shared by the IEA and UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Mooney also discusses opposition to carbon-capture among some environmental groups, such as Friends of the Earth, which has argued that the setbacks at Kemper serve as "a stark reminder of why carbon capture and sequestration is a waste of our tax dollars and a false solution to the climate crisis."

ENERGY:

Nuclear Plant Closures Expected To Increase Under Trump. In a lengthy 2,900-word article about the impact of US nuclear plant closures on clean energy requirements and efforts to fight climate change, E&E Publishing (11/17, Behr) reports that the US nuclear power industry warns that "as much as 15 percent of the 99 U.S. nuclear reactors may be shut down in a decade or less, unable to compete with cheaper natural gas-fired generation." Such a loss of "around-the-clock, carbon-free nuclear energy would significantly undermine U.S. efforts to limit carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, the chief climate policy goal of the outgoing Obama administration." The new president-elect has "pledged to kill U.S. EPA's Clean Power Plan" and its "state-by-state targets for cutting emissions" and the article adds that the "effect on the climate worsens if nuclear power's search for market-based, regulatory and political lifelines runs into a U.S. policy under a Trump White House that shifts

the emphasis, again, to burning more coal and gas.”

Others See Opportunities For Nuclear Power Under Trump. Oil Price (11/18, Slav) examines the question of whether President-elect Trump will back away from the US commitment to greenhouse gas reductions and if he does what would that mean for nuclear power and other sources. The article suggests that even if “Trump does stay true to his word and pulls out of the Paris Agreement, and goes ahead with scrapping subsidies for green power, and cozies up to Big Oil and Coal,” the “pressure” for more clean energy is “unlikely to decline, at which point observers have to ask an important question – then what?” Some, like nuclear advocate Rod Adams argue that nuclear power is “the mother lode of untapped potential.”

INTERNATIONAL:

China’s Premier Calls For More Efficient Use Of Coal While Curbing Emissions. Citing a Chinese state-run radio report, Reuters (11/17) reports Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said China must increase the clean and efficient use of coal, balancing winter demand with efforts to curb emissions and boost renewables.

Additional Reading.

- **Britain Seeks To Curb Pollution By Small-scale Power Plants.** Reuters. (11/17)

OTHER NEWS:

Additional Reading.

- **GOP Senator Says ‘Governors’ Could Run Trump’s EPA.** E&E Daily. (11/17, Bogardus)
- **If This Republican Donor Loves Clean Energy, Then Why Did He Back Fossil-fuel Friendly Candidates?** Grist. (11/17, Adler)

RULES/REGULATIONS/POLICY

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Additional Reading.

- **Trump Could Cut \$42 Billion Worth Of Regs Upon Taking Office.** Daily Caller. (11/17, Bastasch)

TOXICS/TSCA:

Pennsylvania Home Tests For Extremely High Radon Level. The Allentown (PA) Morning Call (11/17, Tatu) reports that a newly constructed house in Center Valley, Pennsylvania recorded the highest level of radon ever reported in the state. The 6,176 pCi/L reading found at the house ranks more than double the highest level record in 2014, and according to one expert, could be “among the highest ever recorded in the country.”

EPA Adds NPEs To Toxics Release Inventory. Greenwire (11/17, Dunsmith) reports that the EPA added “nonylphenol ethoxylates, or NPEs” as a class of toxins to its Toxics Release Inventory. According to the agency, “EPA proposed this rule because we believe that longer-chain NPEs can break down in the environment to short-chain NPEs and nonylphenol, both of which are highly toxic to aquatic organisms.” Bloomberg BNA (11/18, Schultz) reports that the addition of the NPE’s to the list “has been expected for some time now,” according to Barbara Losey, a consultant with the company RegNet Environmental Services.

WATER:

Michigan Receives Approval To Expand Lead Abatement Program. MLive (MI) (11/16, Johnson) reports the Michigan Department Health and Human Services “received approval this week from the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services to expand lead abatement” program in Michigan. The program is “being funded through an amendment of Michigan’s Children’s Health Insurance Program State Plan” and “allows the state to use an estimated \$24 million for a Health Services Initiative that will help prevent lead exposure.”

Opinion: Flint Should Be Top Priority For Trump. In a piece for the Detroit News (11/17) Stephen Cooper, former DC public defender, writes that “there is no more worthy cause Trump can tackle upon taking office than ensuring equal access to clean drinking water for the poor, predominately black people of Flint.”

Flint Residents May Face Water Shutoffs Soon For Unpaid Bills. MLive (MI) (11/16) reports, “The deadline to meet state demands in

collecting outstanding water bill debt has been extended” for resident in Flint, Michigan. However, residential customers “could still soon face shutoffs.” The city’s deadline has been extended through December “to have a 70 percent collection rate on water bills in Flint, according to Flint spokeswoman Kristin Moore.” Those “who do not pay their bills will not receive a water credit in December, will incur a late penalty and face shutoffs.”

Michigan Challenges Court Order To Deliver Bottled Water To Flint

Residents. The [Washington Post](#) (11/17, Dennis) reports Michigan on Thursday “challenged a federal court order demanding that officials deliver bottled water to Flint residents who can’t easily pick up their own from distribution sites around the city, calling the requirement ‘unnecessary’ and saying it would require ‘a tremendous expenditure of taxpayer funds.’” The state “said it plans to appeal the order to the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals.”

Additional coverage is provided by the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/17, Maher), the [Detroit News](#) (11/17, Oosting), [MLive \(MI\)](#) (11/17, Lawler), and the [Detroit Free Press](#) (11/17, Dolan).

Michigan Board Recommends Testing All Infants And Toddlers In State For Lead Poisoning.

The [AP](#) (11/17, Eggert) reports Michigan’s Child Lead Poisoning Elimination Board has recommended that the state test all infants and toddlers in the state for lead poisoning as part of a broader effort to eliminate lead poisoning in the state. Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) tasked the board “with proposing a strategy to protect children from all sources of lead poisoning.”

The [Detroit News](#) (11/17, Oosting) reports the board also recommended expanding home testing and creating “a statewide database of structures with dangerous lead levels” in a “road map” report with over 100 recommendations for the state to eliminate lead poisoning.

[MLive \(MI\)](#) (11/17, Lawler) lists some of the other recommendations made by the board.

[Reuters](#) (11/17, McLaughlin) also covers the story.

House Committee Chairman Predicts Flint Aid Provision Will Be Added To Year-End Spending Bill.

[The Hill](#) (11/17, Zanona, Henry) reports US Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI), the chairman

of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said that a \$170 million aid package for Flint would be added to a year-end spending bill. The aid was previously attached to a waterways bill, which now looks less likely to pass.

[Congressional Quarterly](#) (11/17, Dillon, Williams, Fischler) reports Upton said, “Flint’s going to get their money, that’s the bottom line.”

EPA Says Agency Cannot Solve Mississippi River Pollution From The “Top Down”.

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (11/17, Marcotty) reports that a “scathing review” issued by the Mississippi River Collaborative “is designed as a public outcry to pressure the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to do more to protect the river.” The EPA responded by acknowledging “nutrient pollution has been rising steadily for the last half century, but said the agency cannot solve the problem in the massive Mississippi basin ‘with top down federal action.’”

Additional Reading.

- ***See If Your Child’s School Failed Its Lead, Copper Water Tests.*** [Boston Globe](#). (11/17, Rocheleau)

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